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ABSTRACT

A practicum used an integrated writing approach to improve 28 third-graders' ability to write descriptive paragraphs. The program consisted of two strategies: a process approach and a step-by-step approach. Success was measured by comparing the statistics of a pretest and a posttest and through observation, computer generated worksheets, and computer assisted instruction. Results indicated that 85% of the students could write a descriptive paragraph by the end of the 12-week implementation period. Students in the target group demonstrated positive changes in their daily writings and were motivated to use the computer to improve that writing. (Twenty-six references are included. Nine appendixes contain worksheets, bulletin board signs, and a descriptive words test.) (SR)

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AN INTEGRATED WRITING APPROACH FOR TEACHING DESCRIPTIVE PARAGRAPHS TO THIRD GRADE STUDENTS

by

Laurie S. Hutchison

A Practicum Report

submitted to the Faculty of the Center for the Advancement of Nova University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science.

The abstract of this report may be placed in a National Database System for reference.

February/1992

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ABSTRACT

An Integrated Writing Approach For Teaching Descriptive Paragraphs To Third Grade Students.
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Descriptors: Computer Assisted Instruction/ Computer Uses in Education/ Descriptive Writing/ Creative Writing/ Expository Writing/ Student Writing Models/ Thinking Skills/ Problem Solving/ Grade 3/ Primary Education/ Elementary Education/ Paragraph Composition/ Sentence Combining

The high percentage of third grade students not able to write a descriptive paragraph was addressed by the implementation of an integrated writing approach. This practicum presented a descriptive paragraph writing program that was developed and implemented by the author to improve the writing skills of third grade students. A target group of 28 students was established. The program consisted of two strategies: a process approach and a step-by-step- approach. Success was measured by comparing the statistics of a pretest and a posttest, observation by the author, computer generated worksheets, and computer assisted instruction. Results indicated that 85 percent of the target students could write a descriptive paragraph by the end of the twelve week implementation period. Students within the target group demonstrated positive changes within their daily writings and were motivated to use the computer to improve that writing. This practicum was very successful and will be added to the third grade curriculum.

Authorship Statement

I hereby testify that this paper and the work it reports are entirely my own. When it has been necessary to draw from the work of others, published or unpublished, I have acknowledged such work in accordance with accepted scholarly and editorial practice. I give this testimony freely, out of respect for the scholarship of other professionals in the field and in hope that my own work, presented here, will earn similiar respect.

Signed: Laurie S. Hutchison

Minor contributions of a professional character and comparable nonprofessional assistance may also be acknowledge.

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CHAPTER I

Purpose

Background

The practicum took place in a school in a suburb of a large metropolitan city in the Southwest. The population of the city is approximately 130,000 and has a varied range of socioeconomic levels. The suburb has a diverse occupational makeup. Much of the population commutes to the larger metropolitan area.

The housing levels in the target school community range from $130,000 to $350,000, and the range of incomes is from $80,000 to $200,000. Business and tourism are the main occupations of the community. Business occupations such as lawyers, doctors, real estate agents, and accountants are a few of the occupations held by members of this community.

The school district is large and covers an area of 84 square miles. Four high schools, five middle schools, and 15 elementary schools are featured. The district has a total enrollment of 19,647 students and an operating budget of 78 million dollars for maintance, operations, and capital expenditures. Despite the fact that the school district was founded in 1896 and features a number of older schools, the

district has experienced new growth, and consequently has built four new elementary schools and one new middle school in the last four years. Facility renovations in older schools, the purchase of classroom and laboratory computers, installation of interactive television equipment, and state-of-the-art media centers are some of the improvements that have been made possible through voter-approved bond monies. The district employs approximately 1,100 teachers and 750 classified support staff.

The author's school is located in the northern section of the district. The school has a socioeconomic range from upper to upper-middle class as per interview with the school's principal (McGlothlin, 1991). When the school opened in 1980, there were approximately 450 students and a staff of 25. Presently the population for kindergarten through sixth grade is about 800 and the staff has increased to 60. Class sizes range from 22 to 32 students in grades K-6 and are self-contained in all academic areas. Special education classes have class sizes ranging from 6-10 students and are resource rooms.

The administrative staff consists of a principal, an assistant principal, and a psychologist. The supportive staff includes two secretaries, a nurse, four custodians, and four food service employees. The professional staff is comprised

of 16 primary and 12 intermediate teachers, two learning resource center teachers, a librarian, a vocal music and an instrumental music teacher, a band teacher, an art teacher, a speech pathologist, four physical education teachers, a teacher of the gifted, and two teachers for students who are multiply handicapped. Several aides are employed to assist with playground and lunchroom supervision and to work with the special education teachers.

The author has been a third grade teacher in the target school for seven years and has a classroom containing 28 students. The duties of this instructor include the teaching of all the academic areas within the self-contained classroom. The design and implementation of this practicum was the sole responsibility of this author. The target group consisted of the section of the third grade taught by the author.

Problem Statement

Written language is a skill that is so important in our society today. Some of the skills required to be successful include the mastery of topic sentences, adjectives, complete sentences, punctuation and capitalization, and paragraphing.

This author observed several problems with the writing of descriptive paragraphs by the target population. Students

were not able to formulate and write a complete sentence, a topic sentence, or a paragraph. The author observed a lack of punctuation and capitalization skills within a paragraph. Using adjectives within this type of paragraph also proved to be a problem for this population. In order to verify the observations a test was given to the fourth grade students, who, according to the grade level objectives, should have been able to write a descriptive paragraph upon completion of the third grade. Each student was asked to complete a test that directed the students to write a descriptive paragraph which included choosing a topic, writing a topic sentence, writing at least five sentences, and using at least four descriptive words. Based on these directions, 87 percent of the tested students could not write a descriptive paragraph. Thirteen percent of these students could complete the task successfully. The target group demonstrated the same problems as the previous group. A pretest was given to the target group that showed only three percent of the group could successfully write a descriptive paragraph. Based on district guidelines, 80 percent of the students should be able to successfully complete this task by the end of the third grade.

Conformance with the curriculum guidelines is desirable. The students were obviously not reaching the standards set by the district. The development of writing skills for each grade

level is based upon the successful completion and mastery of those skills from the previous levels. The skill of writing a descriptive paragraph must be achieved in the third grade so students will be prepared for the writing curriculum in the fourth grade. Students must have a strong writing background in order to achieve the goals and objectives set by the district.

Outcome Objectives

This author taught the target students the skill of writing a descriptive paragraph using the computer for motivation and skill-building. The application, Storybook Weaver, was utilized as well as various MECC (Minnesota Educational Computing Corporation) programs. Given the overall goals of this project the following objectives were implemented.

Objective One:

At the conclusion of a 12 week implementation plan, 85 percent of the target group was to be able to write a complete sentence utilizing the application, Magic Slate. This was to be measured through testing at the end of the 12 weeks.

Objective Two:

By the end of a 12 week period, 85 percent of the target group was to be able to correctly punctuate the end of sentences, as measured using the Macmillan English Book (Thoburn: 1987) Chapter One test.

Objective Three:

At the end of a 12 week implementation period, 85 percent of the target group was to be able to correctly capitalize sentences, as measured through the use of the Macmillan English Book (Thoburn: 1987) Chapter One test.

Objective Four:

By the conclusion of a 12 week period, 85 percent of the target group was to be able to identify and write four descriptive words for a given topic. This was to be measured using a computer generated test.

Objective Five:

At the conclusion of a 12 week implementation plan, 80 percent of the target group was to be able to demonstrate critical thinking skills by formulating and writing a topic sentence for a given subject. The target students would use an application called Magic Slate. This was to be measured through testing at the end of the 12 weeks.

Objective Six:

By the end of a 12 week period, 80 percent of the target group was to be able to demonstrate critical thinking skills by creating and writing a five sentence paragraph utilizing a picture as the topic idea. This was to be measured using the computer generated posttest.

Objective Seven:

At the conclusion of this project, 85 percent of the target group was to be able to program and run the application, Storybook Weaver, 85 percent of the time, as measured by the descriptive paragraph printout created by each target student.

Objectives are more than just measuring the outcomes of tests. These objectives indicated certain expected behaviors whose presence were to be verified through the use of the testing procedure. It was the intent of these objectives to describe certain improvements in the educational process. In the past students had consistently shown that there had been a lack of adequate performance at this level. These objectives served as a guide in directing the activities.

CHAPTER II

Research And Solution Strategy

Children attempt to write from a very early age. Marks are left on bathroom walls, on backs of scrap paper, or on big sister's homework. Several attempts may be made at articulating experiences in our lives before writing is actually communicable.

There is a basic need to communicate through writing in every human being. "We write because we want to understand our lives" (Calkins, 1986:3). Surprisingly enough in schools today students do not want to write. The apathy that is felt by these students as they produce barely adequate stories is disheartening to the teaching profession. Instead of trying to understand why students dislike writing so much, schools are full of synthetic writing materials sold with the promise of teaching better writing skills. These materials seem to stifle the creativity that should be experienced by every student (Calkins, 1986).

Within the last five years improving the writing skills of students has become a priority in many school districts. Meagher (1986) set up a process-oriented program in her first grade classroom that produced a tremendous amount of writing

from her students. Meagher organized a "Writing Center" in a corner of her classroom where students could come to write when work was finished. This center was stocked with unlined stationary, lined writing paper, small pictures, glue sticks, picture dictionaries, wallpaper sample books, and fine-tip pens. Students used the "Center" almost immediately and were producing many pieces of writing. An "Authors' Place" was established for displaying student writing. Each student had a writing folder to keep finished work in and see the progress over the year. Some first graders were having trouble constructing a complete sentence, so "A sentence a day" was created. Students were expected to write down a sentence the teacher dictated. There was talk about punctuation, capitalization, letter formation, and spelling. The teacher then wrote the correct sentence on the chalkboard for the students to check their work. This helped the nonwriters clarify more of the writing that was being done, and consequently more writing was produced. Students also wrote in daily logs to help them become more comfortable with writing. By the end of the school year the first grade students were introduced to the word processor and were excited about the ease of typing stories instead of writing them.

Learning to write can be a very complex and complicated business. Haley-James (1983) states that professional

writers all differ in their ways of working with a piece of writing before it is ready to be published. All agreed on five things that are needed in order to write:

1. Determine a reason for writing (writing for a purpose) and choose a topic personally.
2. Talk about topics before writing begins.
3. Rely on listeners and readers to give feedback during a work in progress and when that work is completed.
4. Wait to deal with mechanics until after the piece is clarified for meaning and down on paper.
5. Give writing time to happen. Developing thought and expressing it is seldom done quickly.

The modeling of different kinds of writing genres is very important to young writers. The readings should be highly interesting and possess some of the qualities that are to be eventually sought in students' writings (Smith, 1983). If a teacher expects the students to begin writing paragraphs, then reading and writing them are essential to the modeling process. When a teacher models a particular story or event that happened in the past, more than likely students all start remembering an event that happened in their past. This can set up many pieces of writing for the students.

Teaching critical thinking skills in writing today has become a challenge for teachers. The current emphasis in

testing and instruction has been on multiple choice and short answer responses. Students are simply unused to undertaking critical thinking tasks when they write. It is very crucial that students develop the ability "to understand, organize, synthesize, and communicate information, ideas, and opinions" and be able to demonstrate those thinking skills by "writing compositions, reports, term papers, and essay examinations" by the time college is entered (Olson, 1984).

It is important to teach students that writing is an artful form of self-expression as well as a basic skill. "When children write, it doesn't matter what they write about; it doesn't matter what they write. What is crucial is that what they write be important to them" (Morris, 1984). Students learn that the writer has the power and freedom to write whatever he wants. This freedom is good as long as the writer realizes that certain aspects of writing must be taught as right and wrong. The mechanics of spelling, grammar, and punctuation must be done in a certain way. There is a place for memorization, drill and practice. Students need to be encouraged in the art of writing so they will learn to care about communicating and writing well. This may motivate students to sharpen the skills of writing.

Emphasizing writing as a process and not separate skills is very important in today's classrooms. Shannon (1990)

describes Silberman's work as teachers overemphasizing grammar and mechanics in writing and ignoring meaning, intelligence, and imagination. Teaching writing as a process will enable students to master and retain the rules of grammar and mechanics if they actually write compositions rather than simply running through rote drills. Process writing is being used in many classrooms to individualize writing programs. "Process writing acknowledges that even the youngest student has something to say through writing" (Karnowski,1989:462). Writers use three steps when composing. The first step is prewriting. Writers collect thoughts and data through brainstorming, researching, webbing and interviewing. The second step of composing is drafting a "sloppy copy". Students write down ideas as they come without worrying about spelling, grammar, or handwriting. Several drafts may be written. The third step is revising for meaning and editing for spelling and grammar. An individual conference is set between the student and the teacher. Finally the writing may be recopied and published (Karnowski, 1989). Zaragoza (1987) states that there are a few fundamental elements of a student's process writing program. These include time to write, control of topic choice, the right to be actively in control, the right to focus on one skill of the writing process at a time, the right to an audience, and teacher/student

conferences. Giving students time to write every day instills the habit of writing and gives students the time to develop fluency and practice skills. This also allows students to feel more comfortable with writing.

The movement in writing education today seems to be in teaching the process approach. However there are still some educators who feel this approach is happening too fast. Schafer (1986) feels that teachers are overemphasizing prewriting and activities to develop fluency and are ignoring editing and mechanics. Schafer suggests eight ways to teach punctuation that attempts to strike a balance between product and process writing.

1. Teach punctuation as a means to achieve larger goals.
2. Relate instruction in punctuation to the students' own writing.
3. Teach punctuation as a process of making, not simply marking, sentences.
4. Teach more than just the period, the comma, and the capital letter.
5. Explain that pauses are not an infallible guide.
6. Teach applied grammar as a basis for correct and effective punctuating.
7. Don't delay punctuation instruction until late in the program, but do alternate between indirect and systematic instruction.
8. Alternate between whole-class (or group) work and one-on-one conferences to discuss individual problems.

Following these suggestions, Schafer feels, will not only help teach punctuation more effectively; it will also help-by bringing process and product together-to teach writing more effectively.

Another educator who feels that the process writing approach may be overemphasized is Rodrigues (1985). Rodrigues states that some teachers using the process approach have been so involved in "letting the writer write" that skills training is ignored. These sessions become freewriting free-for-alls. Rodrigues does advocate using the process approach to teach writing but integrated into those approaches should be other techniques, such as models, simulations, and inquiry. The teacher's role should be that of a guide and an evaluator. Teachers need to create meaningful and structured contexts for writing.

For teachers of the primary grades teaching the writing of paragraphs has been a challenge. The idea of formulating a topic sentence and detail sentences baffles primary students. Teachers have had to create ways teach this skill on a very basic level. Hastwell (1987) suggests students organize and structure their work by focusing on smaller pieces of information. Given a specific topic, students break down this topic into smaller pieces and use questioning techniques to gather that information. When gathered, students formulate

smaller topics to write paragraphs. Using a structured step-by-step approach to teach paragraphing is important according to Goodman (1990). A study, by Goodman, was conducted to develop critical thinking and improve expression through creative written language utilizing precision teaching. When writing samples were analyzed, siginificant improvements occured when students were structurally trained. A step-by-step approach is important for primary students because it breaks the ultimate task into smaller pieces. By teaching the pieces and practicing writing the whole paragraph, students can absorb the information on their own developmental level. According to a report done by the Rio Linda Union School District in California (1982), a step-by-step approach found that students mastered writing skills in five essential areas: (1) basic sentence writing; (2) sentence combining; (3) correcting run-on sentences; (4) adding details; and (5) paragraph writing. Students maintained their own daily progress chart and objectives were clearly stated for each lesson. Rankin (1988) suggests that teaching topic placement at the beginning of the paragraph is easier for students to understand. This gives them a starting point and facilitates the writing of the paragraph. Exposing students to paragraphs through whole class discussions and brainstorming ideas for writing paragraphs will increase the success the students

have when they must write one alone. Teaching primary students to write descriptive paragraphs is easier if the students can look at familiar objects or pictures and describe them. This produces a visual effect and makes it easier to get a description down on paper (Huse-Inman, 1981).

Using the computer as a tool to help develop and write paragraphs can be motivating and at the same time be a learning experience for students. A word processing program can help students realize the ease of revising and editing the writing they have produced. Crozier (1986) states:

> Possibly the greatest educational benefit that a word processor has is that it makes young writers proud of their writing. Publication is important to the self esteem of a writer. The word processor facilitates this. In addition, word processors cause the writing to be immediate and public.

Current research suggests that students who use computers for composing write more, revise more, and improve the quality of compositions. Computer composing seems to have a positive effect on writing improvement (Luchte, 1987). However, without proper teaching (Wheeler, 1985), the quality of writing will not improve. Having students write on a word processor can facilitate the interaction between the students and teacher. Teachers can intervene at appropriate points to provide help with difficulties and can react as a reader to the

text written by the students. "Word processors also give students power to produce neat, printed work and to correct errors without damaging the appearance of the paper" (MacArthur, 1988:538). Word processors provide motivation for both teachers and students. The more students write on a computer, the more excited and enthusiastic they become (Moore, 1989).

Solution Strategy

Many teachers have looked for ways to get students to produce quality writing, feel comfortable with writing, and learn the skills needed to become good writers. There are various strategies available for teachers to incorporate in their programs that will help accomplish these goals. This author has chosen to use an integrated approach to teaching the writing of descriptive paragraphs. By using a combination of a step-by-step approach and the process writing approach, based on current research, this is the most effective way to teach descriptive paragraph writing to third graders. The step-by-step approach breaks down the paragraph into smaller pieces such as: capitalization, punctuation, complete sentences, a topic sentence, and adjectives according to the report done by Rio Linda Union School District (1982). Teaching

these skills separately at first and then putting them together to write a paragraph will enable students to master the various skills and feel comfortable about writing. Experiencing success with the small pieces will help students accomplish the larger goal. It will be easier for students to absorb these smaller pieces of information at their own developmental level according to Goodman (1990). The process writing approach teaches the importance of developing comfortable feelings about writing by giving students topic choices, time to write, time to share the writings, and by focusing on one skill of the writing process at a time as suggested by Zaragoza (1987). Writing every day is essential to fostering comfort and developing good writing skills. Students need to practice the writing skills that have been taught in order to become good writers. Using a "Writing Center" to entice and excite students about writing by providing various materials is important according to Meagher (1986). Using both of these approaches will achieve the goals and objectives stated by this author for teaching descriptive paragraph writing to third graders.

CHAPTER III

Method

This implementation lasted for 12 weeks and involved a target group of 28 third grade students. During this time various writing skills were taught to the target group to enable them to learn to write a descriptive paragraph. This author conducted a series of lessons three times a week in the classroom and once a week in the computer lab. The students were required to work in cooperative groups or individually during these times.

During week one a pretest was given to students to determine the amount of knowledge that was known about descriptive paragraphs. Classroom activities and worksheets focused on writing complete sentences. The author explained that a complete sentence has to have a subject and a verb. Students brainstormed sentences on the chalkboard. A worksheet on complete sentences (Appendix A:35) was given to the students. The current weekly spelling words were used by the students to write complete sentences independently. At the end of the week the students worked in pairs on a worksheet entitled, "Writing Complete Sentences" (Appendix B:37). In the computer lab there was a demonstration of the

software program, "Storybook Weaver" (1991). This program is a versatile writing tool designed to engage students in the writing process. Storybook Weaver allows students to move easily between pictures and story text and provides flexibility in the writing process. The students learned how to "load" this program.

During week two the classroom activities involved learning to correctly punctuate the end of sentences using worksheets and chalkboard demonstrations. Four kinds of sentences were discussed: statement, question, command, and exclamation. Each student brainstormed all four kinds of sentences on paper. A punctuation worksheet (Appendix C:39) was then completed independently. After further review the students worked together to complete a second punctuation worksheet (Appendix D:41). In the computer lab the students explored and learned how to run the program "Storybook Weaver".

Week three in the classroom focused on correctly capitalizing any part of a complete sentence. This was accomplished using modeling techniques (overhead projector) and worksheets. The author made a number of overhead sheets containing sentences with capitalization mistakes. Students corrected the sentences on the overhead projector one at a time. Capitalizing proper nouns and the beginning of sentences

was reviewed. A worksheet (Appendix E:43) on capitalization and punctuation was given and completed by the students independently. A capitalization worksheet (Appendix F:45) was completed in pairs by the students. In the computer lab the students continued to learn the many features and procedures for running the program, "Storybook Weaver".

Week four consisted of introducing topic sentences in the classroom. Worksheets, bulletin boards, and literature readings were used to teach this concept. The definition of a paragraph and a topic sentence were posted on a bulletin board (Appendix G:47). The whole class read and wrote each definition on paper. Indenting paragraphs, capitalizing and punctuating sentences were discussed as a whole class. Many ideas were listed for topic sentences on the chalkboard. A class paragraph was composed on the overhead projector. Each student wrote this paragraph paying attention to indenting the first sentence and margins on both sides of the paper. The students learned how to load and type on the program called "Magic Slate" (1984) in the computer lab. This program is a word processing program that is designed for primary students. The type is large and easy to read. The program allows students to delete an unwanted letter, word, sentence, or paragraph without damaging the copy or leaving a blank

space on the paper. Magic Slate gives students polished writing in a shorter period of time.

During week five of the implementation period paragraphs were introduced using chalkboard modeling, bulletin boards, worksheets, and readings from literature. Topic sentences were reviewed. Students worked in groups of four to brainstorm topic sentences for ideas given to them by the author. A review of complete sentences, punctuation, and capitalization was also completed at this time. An assessment was given for these areas. The program, "Magic Slate", was used by the students to practice writing paragraphs using the correct format on the computer.

Week six in the classroom had students learning about adjectives and how to use them to describe objects and pictures. Worksheets, literature, and chalkboard demonstrations were used to teach about this part of speech. Students were given a worksheet (Appendix H:52) and asked to underline the adjectives in each sentence. Various descriptive passages were taken from literature books and used to show how adjectives described nouns. Sentences were written on the chalkboard and students were asked to circle the adjectives and compare the answers with a partner. In the computer lab students loaded and ran the program, "Storybook

Weaver". The students learned how to type in a class paragraph and put a graphic on it.

During week seven there was more work on adjectives using worksheets, literature readings, and composing pieces of writing. Topic sentences continued to be discussed and reviewed. Class paragraphs were written on the chalkboard utilizing the students' brainstorming ideas. In the computer lab the program, "Communikeys" (1986) was used by the students to increase their skill and accuracy with the keyboard.

Week eight in the classroom introduced descriptive paragraphs and how to write one. Activities included modeling, group work, worksheets, finding descriptive paragraphs in literature, and writing class descriptive paragraphs on the chalkboard. The author brought in an object for the class to describe. The whole class created three topic sentences on the chalkboard. The students chose one topic sentence and wrote one descriptive paragraph in cooperative groups of three. Each student copied the group's paragraph and then used it in the computer lab to write on the "Storybook Weaver" program. The paragraph format was reviewed and applied at this time.

Week nine focused on indenting paragraphs, continued writing of descriptive paragraphs, and reading descriptive

paragraphs from literature. Examples were brought in and read throughout the week. Students worked in groups of four. Each group was given a topic sentence. The groups had to write a descriptive paragraph based on the topic sentence. This was presented to the rest of the class for suggestions. In the computer lab "Storybook Weaver" was used to write descriptive paragraphs and utilize graphics.

In the tenth week the instructor continued to review and reinforce paragraphs, topic sentences, and adjectives. Pairs of students worked together to write a descriptive paragraph by describing a picture. They brainstormed a topic sentence and wrote four detail sentences using descriptive words. This paragraph was used in the computer lab. The students wrote this paragraph on the computer, added a graphic, and printed it out using the program, "Storybook Weaver". These compositions were displayed on a bulletin board in the classroom.

During the eleventh week all elements of writing a descriptive paragraph were reviewed using modeling, worksheets, and sharing. This included complete sentences, capitalization, punctuation, topic sentences, indenting, and adjectives. A posttest was given. In the computer lab final paragraph work using "Storybook Weaver" was completed.

The twelfth week took place after the two week winter holiday break. There was an extensive review of all that was learned prior to the break including complete sentences, capitalization, punctuation, adjectives, topic sentences, paragraphs, and descriptive paragraphs. A second posttest was given at the end of this week to see exactly how much learning was retained by the students.

CHAPTER IV

Results

The evaluation of the writing skills of students can be very subjective. This subjectivity requires specific evaluation methods to be used in order to assess the level of competency for each individual student.

The evaluation process for objective one consisted of having the target group of students work with the program, "Magic Slate", in the computer lab. The students were asked to think of a complete sentence and enter it on the computer using the "Magic Slate" program. When printed out, 96 percent of the students were able to think and write a complete sentence. This evaluation took place during week five.

The objective two evaluation process had each student demonstrate the ability to correctly punctuate the end of a complete sentence using a part of the Macmillan English Book Chapter One Test. This test was a multiple choice format which had the student read a sentence and decide if the correct punctuation should be a period, a question mark, or an exclamation mark. The student filled in the circle for the correct answer. There were five questions on this test. During the sixth week this test was given to determine if 85

percent of the target group could correctly punctuate complete sentences. The student had to obtain a score of five out of five to successfully meet this objective. When the author scored the tests, 93 percent of the students were able to correctly meet this objective.

To evaluate objective three each student was to complete a part of the Macmillan English Book Chapter One Test. This test, a multiple choice format consisting of five questions, asked the student which word in the sentence needed a capital letter. Four words were given as the choices. The student had to pick the correct word and fill in a circle. Students had to obtain a score of four out of five correct answers in order to meet the criteria for success of this objective. This test was given at the end of the sixth week. When given, 100 percent of the students successfully met this objective.

Objective four was evaluated using a test generated on the computer by this author (Appendix I:54). Each student was given five sentences with one or two descriptive words in each sentence. The student had to underline the descriptive words. The second part of the test asked the student to write four descriptive words on the topic of dogs. The students had to correctly answer nine out of ten questions in order to meet the criteria for mastery of this objective. This test was given at

the end of week seven. Given the results of the test, the author concluded that 89 percent of the students successfully met the goal of this objective.

The evaluation process for objective five consisted of students being given a list of four details that all related to each other. The students then had to formulate and write a topic sentence about those details utilizing the computer program, "Magic Slate". Eighty-three percent of the students were able to accomplish this task and were successful in the completion of this objective. This test was given during the fifth week.

Objective six was evaluated by having the students create and write a five sentence paragraph utilizing a picture as the topic idea. The students were all given a computer generated picture from the program, "Storybook Weaver". This picture was to be used by the students to formulate and write a five sentence paragraph that included a topic sentence and four detail sentences. Eighty-nine percent of the students included this criteria and were successful in meeting the goal of this objective. This assessment was given at the end of the tenth week.

Objective seven was evaluated by observation and a computer printout by each target student. This author observed the students successfully programming and running

the application, "Storybook Weaver", in the computer lab 100 percent of the time. The students also created a descriptive paragraph, a graphic to go with it, and printed it out in order to meet a second criteria for this objective. The students were able to meet this second criteria 90 percent of the time. This was accomplished at the end of the twelfth week.

CHAPTER V

Recommendations

Many opportunities were given to teachers throughout the school year to share ideas and accomplishments that have happened in the classroom. This author's target school had a faculty meeting once a month that had a segment of time set aside for teachers to share ideas and/or accomplishments. This practicum was presented to the target school's faculty during one of the meetings this year. Manuals were provided to the teachers of grades three to six. The practicum results were discussed and suggestions were given to these teachers on using this method in their classrooms. This enabled teachers to plan for the next year's curriculum to include some of the ideas from this practicum.

Written language was one of the target school's goals for the 1991-92 school year. Having this information available to the teachers helped accomplish some of the goals written specifically for this school. Goals included increasing the number of opportunities the students had for writing, increasing the proficiency of writing skills, and using the computer to teach written language. Many of the goals of this practicum directly related to the target school's goals.

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Appendix A

Complete Sentences Worksheet

NAME _____

MAKING COMPLETE SENTENCES

Directions: Find the group of words in each pair that is a sentence. Draw a line under the sentence.

1. The spaceship with yellow lights.
   The spaceship came to Earth.

2. Climbed off the ship.
   The robots climbed off the ship.

3. The creatures walked quietly.
   The creatures.

4. The creatures three toes.
   The creatures walked on three toes.

5. They had seven fingers and five hands.
   Had seven fingers and five hands.

6. The spaceship lights.
   The spaceship decided it was time to go.

7. All the creatures ran for the ship.
   For the ship.

8. The spaceship sped out of sight.
   The spaceship out of sight.

Appendix B

Writing Complete Sentences Worksheet

Names _____ and _____

WRITING COMPLETE SENTENCES

Directions: Write a complete sentence for each letter in the words below. The sentence must be about the word that is listed. You must find a partner and work together.

C
R
E
A
T
U
R
E

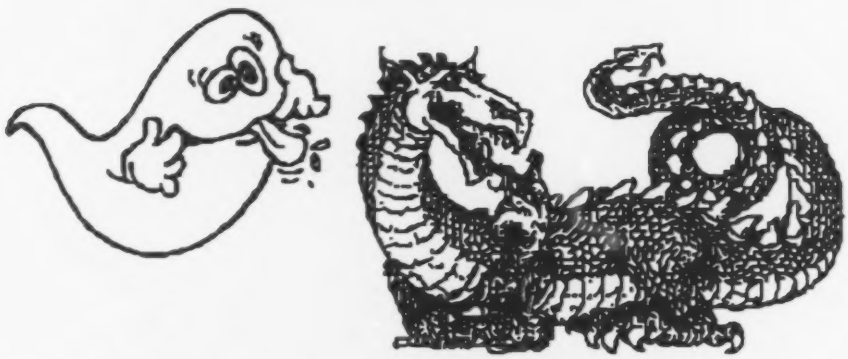
A
L
I
E
N

Appendix C

Punctuating Sentences Worksheet

Name _____

PUNCTUATING SENTENCES



Directions: What do you see in the picture? Write four sentences.

1. Write a statement.

_____

_____

2. Write a question.

_____

_____

3. Write an exclamation.

_____

_____

4. Write a command.

_____

_____

Appendix D

Punctuating Sentences II Worksheet

Name _____

PUNCTUATING SENTENCES II

There are four kinds of sentences. They are statement, command, question, and exclamation. A ***statement*** is a sentence that tells something (ends with a period). A ***command*** is a sentence that makes a request (ends with a period). A ***question*** is a sentence that asks something (ends with a question mark). And an ***exclamation*** is a sentence that shows strong feeling (ends with an exclamation mark).

Directions: Match each sentence with the correct end punctuation. Circle the correct punctuation.

1. The dragon ate cows for dinner every night . ? !
2. He loved the taste of broiled meat . ? !
3. Do you like the taste of broiled meat . ? !
4. The dragon captured four cows . ? !
5. An angry farmer would shout at the dragon . ? !
6. Those are my cows . ? !
7. The dragon would run off into the forest . ? !
8. Please do not eat us . ? !
9. Do you think I like tender cows . ? !
10. The dragon ate all the cows in town . ? !
11. The townspeople sent a dragonslayer to kill him. . ? !

Appendix E

Capitalization Worksheet

Name _____

CAPITALIZATION WORK

DIRECTIONS: Describe what you think the two monsters are doing in the picture above. Give each creature a name and write at least 5 sentences. Remember to capitalize any words in your sentences that need it.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix F

Capitalization Worksheet II

Name _____

CAPITALIZATION WORKSHEET

DIRECTIONS: Using the pictures at the top, write **3** different sentences (statement, command, question, **or** exclamation) describing those pictures. You must start each sentence with a capital letter. Be sure to use the correct end punctuation.

_____

_____

_____

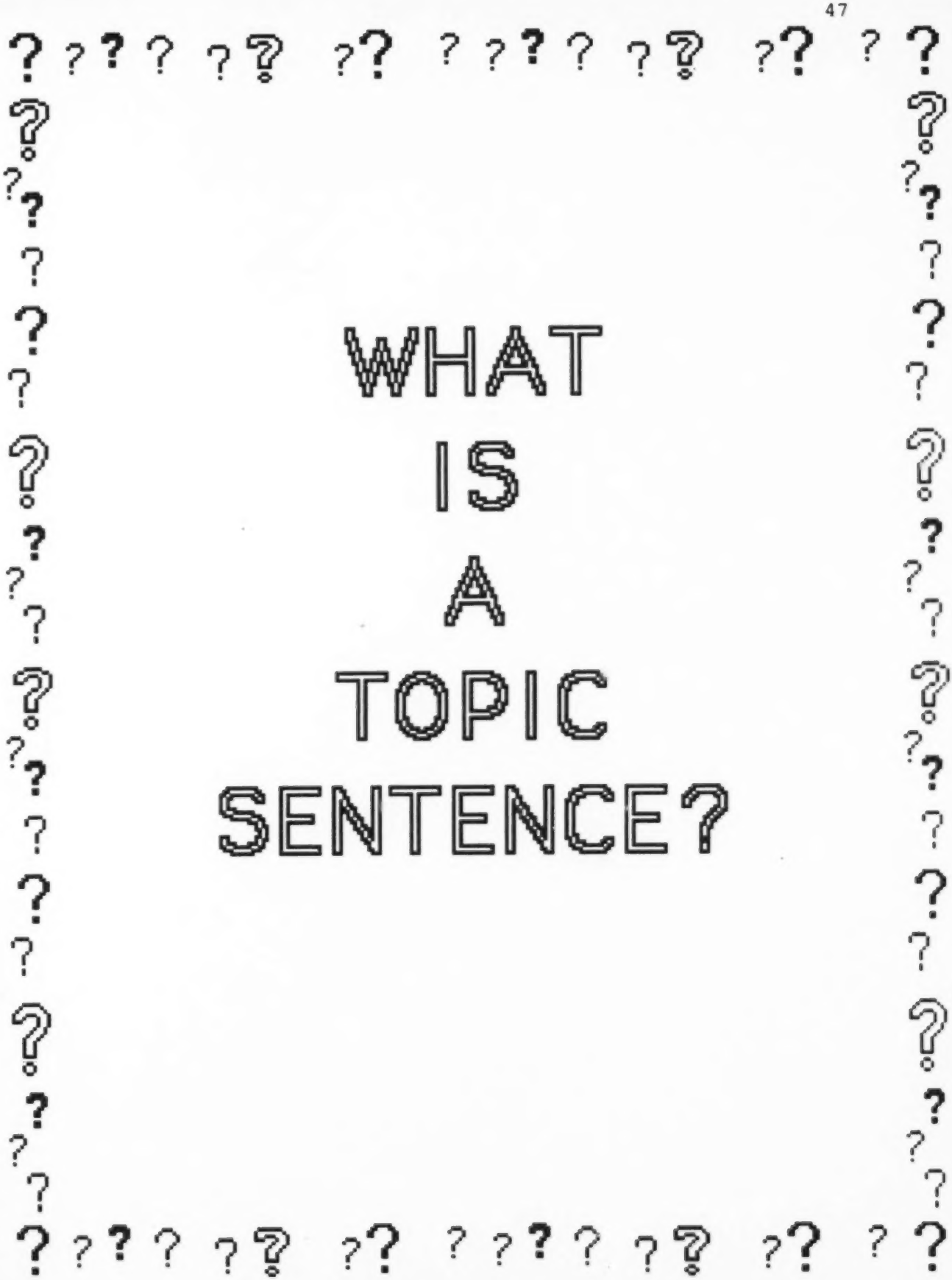
_____

_____

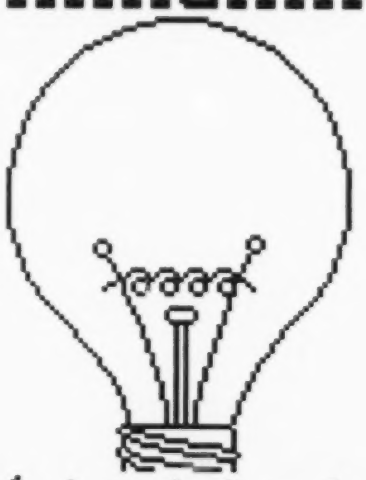
_____

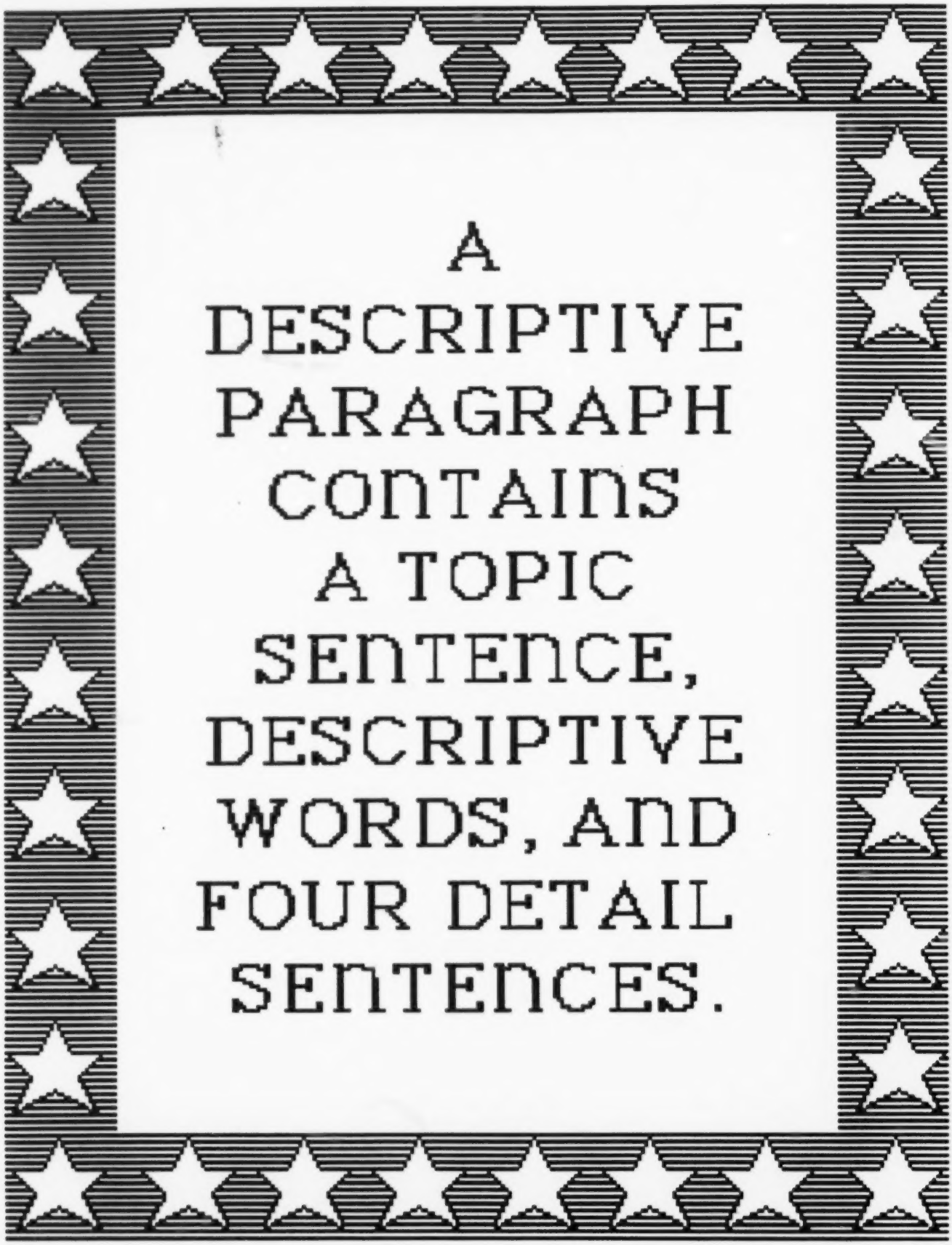
Appendix G

Bulletin Board Signs


WHAT
IS
A
TOPIC
SENTENCE?

A TOPIC SENTENCE STATES THE MAIN IDEA OF A PARAGRAPH




A
DESCRIPTIVE
PARAGRAPH
CONTAINS
A TOPIC
SENTENCE,
DESCRIPTIVE
WORDS, AND
FOUR DETAIL
SENTENCES.

WHAT IS A DESCRIPTIVE PARAGRAPH?

Appendix H

Descriptive Words Worksheet

DESCRIPTIVE WORDS

Directions: Underline all the descriptive words in each sentence. Make sure **all** descriptive words are found.

1. The shaggy dog was under the blue table.

2. John bought a red and yellow truck.

3. His horse galloped down the grassy hill.

4. She left her black leather purse at the grocery store.

5. Billy is going to the toy store to buy a red, black, and blue car.

6. Cathy ran down the dusty old street.

7. Big Bertha is eating a jar of green pickles.

8. Laurie has a dog that is brown, white and tan.

9. Gomez is a happy beagle.

Appendix I

Descriptive Words Test

DESCRIPTIVE WORDS TEST

Directions: Read each sentence and underline the descriptive words.

1. John lives in a little house.
2. The girl is eating a juicy, red apple.
3. Carrie made vanilla ice cream with chocolate sauce.
4. Lazy Jane is riding the blue bus to her work.
5. Ten huge elephants paraded past the giant audience.

Directions: You are given the topic of **dogs** to write about. Write four descriptive words you would use to describe a dog.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____